



Indiana State Department of Health

Epidemiology Resource Center

Quick Facts

About...*Hepatitis D*

What is hepatitis D?

Hepatitis D, also known as delta hepatitis, is a serious disease of the liver caused by the hepatitis D virus (HDV). It is uncommon in the United States. You must already be infected with the hepatitis B virus to become infected with hepatitis D (see Hepatitis B Quick Facts). You may recover from an acute case of hepatitis D, or you may develop chronic hepatitis D. Chronic hepatitis D can lead to liver failure or cirrhosis.

How is hepatitis D spread?

Hepatitis D can only occur along with hepatitis B infection. These viruses are spread when blood or certain body fluids, such as semen and vaginal secretions, from an infected person enter the body of a person who is not infected. Some examples include:

- Having unprotected sex with an infected partner
- Sharing needles, syringes or "works" used to inject drugs
- Sharing personal care items, such as toothbrushes, razors or nail clippers
- Being born to an infected mother

An infected person with no symptoms can still spread hepatitis D to others.

Who is at risk for hepatitis D?

Your risk for hepatitis D is higher if you:

- Have hepatitis B
- Are an injection drug user
- Have unprotected sex with an infected person

- Are a man who has sex with men
- Are a hemodialysis patient
- Are a health care or public safety worker
- Are born to an infected mother
- Immigrated from southern Italy, eastern Europe, South America, Africa, or the Middle East

How do I know if I have hepatitis D?

See your health care provider. Blood tests will determine if you are infected with hepatitis D.

What are the symptoms of hepatitis D?

Symptoms may include:

- Yellowing of the eyes or skin (jaundice)
- Tiredness
- Lack of appetite
- Nausea and vomiting
- Abdominal pain
- Dark urine
- Joint pain
- Fever

How is hepatitis D treated?

See your health care provider. Supportive care is the treatment for acute hepatitis D. Hepatitis D co-infections cause more serious and rapid liver damage. There is no effective treatment, except for liver transplant.

How is hepatitis D prevented?

There is no vaccine for hepatitis D but it can be prevented by the hepatitis B vaccine in persons not already infected with hepatitis B. See your health care provider for more information on hepatitis B vaccine. Ensure that anyone living in your household receives hepatitis B vaccination.

All information presented is intended for public use. For more information, please refer to:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
<http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/index.htm>

Hepatitis B Foundation

http://www.hepb.org/hepb/hepatitis_D.htm

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